village? Then we wondered (8/9/93) whether people really want all this interactivity. Mixed results here. Disney Studios CEO reminds us "TV is a passive experience." But poll by MCI released at Summit found 75% rank info & educational svcs as major reason for info hiway. Lessons learned: Futurist predictions a) depend on market demand, not technological capability; b) take far longer to eventuate than first appears likely; c) on this issue, as another Disney exec said, "No one knows what people want."

PANDERING TO PERCEPTION -- OR SAVVY LISTENING TO IT?

An indicator of how oversimplified PC has become is the ink/paper issue. On the face of its envelopes, highly visible just below the address window, Co-op America notes:

> "non-chlorine bleached, 100% recyclable paper (10% post-consumer); soy-based inks; recyclable window"

Working Assets Long Distance, an "alternative" social action company, assures customers it "is the only long distance company that prints its bills on unbleached, 100% post-consumer recycled paper." Then, "If every phone company in the US did this, over one million trees a year would be saved!" Saved? For what? Trees are a crop, like corn. If not harvested, they fall over & decay. Commercially grown tree crops for use in lumber & paper are different issues than destroying the rain forests or cutting old growth timber.

Non-chlorine processing of paper & ink base can have water pollution impact. Recycling may be an economic benefit; no one has quantified the *total* economic impact balancing jobs gained in a new recycling industry vs. those lost in old line natural resource industries.

BUT -- all these topics get lumped in this approach. And, for better or worse, many people make the simplistic equation between them & being "green," which is politically correct. For the 2 organizations cited, pandering to this perception is vital -- given their target publics. But for most organizations, would anyone notice if the recyclable symbol et al were simply forgotten?

- Precedent: remember when the union label was mandatory?
- Concurrent example: trumpeting you are an American or Canadian company

BOTTOM LINE: IS THIS RELATED TO YOUR ISSUES?

1. If so, or you're also a victim of PC or oversimplification, shouldn't you avoid adding to the hysteria by pandering to whatever is in at the moment?

2. Or maybe *being PC* will cause cognitive dissonance in your skeptical publics, and get them to listen. You have to be sincere about it, but using recycled paper is a low price to pay for that.

3. Or is this another instance of listening before speaking, of showing respect for audiences' perceptions, however misguided we feel them to be, before expecting them to hear our messages?

ORGANIZATIONS WANT DIVERSITY: A CULTURE CHANGE JOB FOR PR

Organizations *are* working to achieve diversity, which they see as a factor in competitiveness.	But they *fail* to implement it, for a variety of reasons (see below).	Experts say what's required is culture change -- making diversity a major *opportunity for pr*.

Conference Board study shows growing sentiment that managing diversity impacts a company financially -- 4 in 10 execs view it as a competitive opportunity. Other motivating factors:

1. Competition for talent; competition for changing markets; changes in the competitive environment.

2. 85% of those *entering* the workforce by 2000 will be people of color, women & immigrants. Only 15% will be US born white males.

On the flip side, organizations don't implement diversity because of:

1. Competition with other issues

2. Management's belief that demographic changes won't affect ability to attract employees

3. Confusion between diversity, affirmative action & equal opportunity

> Statistic to quiet doubters: in Massachusetts, a far northern state notorious for racial problems impacting blacks, especially school integration in Boston, Hispanics/Latinos [the latest semantic quagmire; which is it?] now outnumber African-Americans, reports Census Bureau.

Surprisingly, notes Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, cost is not a primary factor.

HOMOGENEITY WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

Longterm effectiveness of organizations that are homogeneous, especially at top management level, may be in jeopardy, reports a team from **Center for Creative Leadership.** "Homogeneity is likely to breed a narrow view of the world that limits openness to alternative perspectives & actions -- a perilous situation in a turbulent world."

Homogeneity arises from the *ASA cycle*:

1. *Attraction effect*. People are attracted to organizations based on the people already there.

2. *Selection effect*. Organizations select workers from the pool of applicants attracted to it.

3. *Attrition effect*. Attraction & selection are imperfect; some workers fit better than others. Those who fit most poorly will leave.

NEW RESEARCH MAY HELP   The Center, working with U of Md, is researching the ASA cycle, testing such hypotheses as:

1. Organizations can be characterized by the homogeneity of the personalities of members, such as similarity of Myers-Briggs type.

2. Individuals who score differently from the organizational norm on a particular personality variable are less satisfied with various aspects of their work such as pay, supervision, working conditions.

3. People at the same level in an organization tend to have similar scores on personality measures -- ie, members of top-management teams are more similar to each other in personality type than they are to people at different levels in the organization. (Contrast this to strategy of managing conflict for creativity)

> "Are the problems experienced by General Motors not only attributable to such factors as a weak American economy & 'dumping' by Japanese & German automakers but also **a consequence of the homogeneity of personality of top management,** which led to an incapacity to sense changes in the business environment & make necessary changes?"

4. Over time the proportion of people with similar personalities in an organization will increase. Birds of a feather etc.

Preliminary data indicate support for these hypotheses.

RESOURCES FOR AFFECTING CULTURE CHANGE

1. To keep posted on the ASA research, contact Center, POBox 26300, Greensboro 27438-6300; 910/288-7210)

2. The transition from affirmative action to workforce diversity is traced in Equal Opportunity Publications' 25th anniversary brochure. Historical timeline includes: inauguration of JFK in '61; creation of the Presidential Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity; Equal Pay Act in '63; Civil Rights Act in '64; requiring annual affirmative action plans from major gov't contractors; formation of NOW; Americans with Disabilities Act. EOP's newest publication, *WD: The Journal of Workforce Diversity*, has 1st issue out this month. (Info from EOP, 150 Motor Pkwy, Hauppauge, NY 11788-5145; 516/273-0066, fax 516/273-8936)

3. Resource for books & videos on diversity, as well as other intercultural themes, is *Intercultural Press*, Box 700, Yarmouth, Maine 04096; 207/846-5168, fax 217/846-5181. Not available in stores.

4. Get a copy of PRSA's Multicultural Directory (see p.3) to hire minority consultants or network with colleagues who can offer advice & support.

CHAOS THEORY SHOWS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DATA SUPERIOR

As chaos theory (the study of nonlinear dynamics) replaces the belief that our universe is deterministic & linear, it becomes increasingly difficult to make predictions -- i.e., using market research to predict sales (or survey research to predict behavior), writes Arnold Diamond, Heller Research Group (Port Washington, NY) in Marketing Research magazine.

As a result, quantitative info loses value; *qualitative info gains value*. An overview:

● Linear relationships have been preferred since they are simpler to deal with. If an "X" value is known, a fairly good estimate of a "Y" value can be made. But linear relationships are the exception, not the rule.

● Chaos theory says that the smallest change may have a large effect; they grow exponentially. (In a linear system, minute errors stay minute.) A popular metaphor is that a butterfly flapping its wings in Tokyo can affect the weather in NYC. This is the theory of Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions (SDIC).

● SDIC means that minute changes in initial conditions can quickly (after just a small number of iterations) lead to opposite results from the predicted ones. With each iteration, errors in a chaotic system get larger & larger until no accuracy is possible.

● Survey research & market research get into trouble when they attempt to predict specific actions or market shares well into the future. Knowing what consumers do in a real or simulated test market will not necessarily predict what they will do in a national rollout. Small changes in the initial conditions of the test market can lead to very different sales results.

● Better is to understand *why* consumers in a test market are buying the new product. "We sometimes talk about consumer hot buttons. This concept may be more important than we thought. It may well be the **quality of a variable rather than its quantity that is more important in predicting consumer behavior.**"

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **DIRECTORY OF MULTICULTURAL PROFESSIONALS & FIRMS** has been published by PRSA. Edited by Barbara Hines (Howard U, DC), directory lists more than 800 professionals working in pr, + 170 minority-owned firms & their specialties -- from 32 states, DC & Puerto Rico. Assistance was received from Asian American Adv'g/PR Alliance, Black PR Society, Hispanic PR Society. The largest group of minority practitioners identified to date. Proceeds from sale are earmarked for minority scholarships. ($30, $40 nonmbrs, + $3 shipping & handling; from PRSA, 33 Irving Place, NYC 10003)

¶ **VP GORE'S INFO HIWAY SUMMIT SUGGESTED ANSWERS** to queries asked by <u>prr</u> recently. We asked (12/20/93) whether virtual media could replace face-to-face. Summit participants take it a step further, seeing info hiway as way to link a fragmented, mobile society into a **virtual community.** Is this like phone sex? CompuServe buddy groups? Or just McLuhan's global